

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

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COLLECTION

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT
FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 March 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. V.C. Trivedi

(India)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A.F. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA
Mr. D. SILVEIRA da MOTA
Mr. A. da COSTA GUIMARAES
Mr. L. de ALENCAR ARARIPE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. T. DAMIANOV
Mr. D. KOSTOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG
U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. S.F. RAE
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER
Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. E. FRANCO
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. M. TELLO MACIAS

Nigeria:

Mr. B.O. TONWE

Poland:

Mr. J. GOLDBLAT

Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO

Mr. O. IONESCO

Mr. C. UNGUREANU

Mr. A. COROIANU

Sweden:

Mr. R.H. BERGSTROM

Mr. A. EDELSTAM

Mr. U. ERICSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN

Mr. G.A. KISELEV

Mr. O.A. GRINEVSKY

Mr. I.I. CHEPROV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF

Mr. A.A. SALAM

United Kingdom:

Mr. I.F. PORTER

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

Mr. M.R. MORLAND

United States of America:

Mr. W. FOSTER

Mr. G. BUNN

Mr. C.G. BREAN

Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (India): I declare open the 296th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. FOSTER (United States of America): I have asked for the floor to report the outcome of the co-Chairmen's deliberations with respect to the recess.

3. The United States proposed a recess until Tuesday, 9 May 1967, because of the need for further allied consultations on draft language for a non-proliferation treaty, primarily concerning the article dealing with international safeguards on the peaceful nuclear activities of civil nuclear Powers. My Government concluded that the business-like way of proceeding with the negotiations of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament was to present draft treaty language to the Committee. A number of other members of the Committee have urged us to do so as soon as possible; and I must inform the Committee that I see no way to do it before the end of the proposed recess period. This results from the need for further allied consultations, a condition recognized by the eight-nation Joint Memorandum on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (ENDC/178), to which we have referred before.

4. Having concluded that businesslike discussions could not begin until we had a draft, my delegation proposes that the spring recess come earlier this year and that it extend for six weeks. My co-Chairman has advised me that he has no objection to this proposal. I can therefore report that your co-Chairmen recommend a recess until 9 May 1967.

5. I recognize that subjects other than non-proliferation are before this Committee. My delegation has not wished to divert the Committee from its most important task -- the achievement of a non-proliferation treaty. The co-Chairmen have not proposed any limitation on the right of other delegations to discuss other subjects, and we are not proposing one now. Some delegations have already referred to other subjects, and I assume they will do so when we meet again.

6. My delegation will exert every effort during the recess to achieve a draft that can be placed before the Committee as the joint recommendation of the two co-Chairmen. My Government continues to believe that there is no more important problem before the world than to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. A treaty to this end must be achieved, or the chances of igniting the flame that can incinerate the world will increase many-fold with each passing year.

7. Mr. BERGSTROM (Sweden): I wish to say that my delegation is not happy about this suggestion of a recess of six weeks. We think that such a step could be interpreted in our own countries, as well as in other countries, as a failure by the Eighteen-Nation Committee to come to grips with the important work-load that has been entrusted to the Conference by the United Nations General Assembly.
8. We consider that the Committee has indeed precious little time to obtain results on non-proliferation, as well as on other items, and that a long recess at the beginning of its session would diminish instead of enhance the possibilities of positive results. We cannot see clearly why discussions could not continue here parallel with the consultations needed within alliances. There are several important items connected with the non-proliferation issue which could be usefully discussed, such as the question of guarantees that has already been mentioned by several delegations. There are, also, of course, as my delegation has mentioned earlier, other important aspects of disarmament which we shall have to discuss sooner or later if we are to fulfil the mandate of the General Assembly (ENDC/185).
9. Why not open up that discussion immediately after Easter? Should the majority of the Committee not object to the proposal for a recess, we will not press our point. But what we do want to press for is a clear indication by our co-Chairmen that this recess will not mean that the Committee will be deprived of the possibilities of really negotiating a non-proliferation treaty, and that we shall not thus be confronted with a text on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We expect that when we assemble here again we shall have from the co-Chairmen a joint proposal of a text which we shall then discuss together -- all of us in this Committee. The United Kingdom representative, Lord Chalfont, said at our last meeting -- and I fully agree with him -- that "any long delay in getting a non-proliferation treaty now may mean no treaty at all." (ENDC/PV.295, para. 37)
10. Whatever the decision of the Committee may be on a recess, we hope -- and we count upon it -- that the preparatory work already started will continue within and among delegations in order to enable us to reach speedy and good results the moment we have a draft text to base our deliberations upon. For our part, we should thus be prepared and even anxious to use the recess period for continued work within the group of the eight non-aligned countries. As you yourself are well aware, Mr. Chairman, the studies under way in that group point towards useful clarifications and, I trust, constructive results.

11. The CHAIRMAN (India): I should now like to say a few words on behalf of the delegation of India.

12. The proposal for a recess until 9 May recommended by the two co-Chairmen is before us. As far as the delegation of India is concerned, in these matters, unless very important and over-riding questions of policy are involved, it would not like to go against the recommendation of the co-Chairmen. Therefore, we would not say that we are against the proposal. At the same time, the Indian delegation shares some of the misgivings voiced by Ambassador Bergström of Sweden, and also supports some of the suggestions made by him.

13. As we know, many delegations in this Committee have been talking in terms of a treaty which should be a comprehensive and genuine treaty on non-proliferation, a treaty which should solve the real problem of proliferation. Some of us, including the Indian delegation, have from time to time made various suggestions for attaining that particular objective.

14. In that context it has been suggested by some of the nuclear-weapon Powers that it might be advisable to have concurrent discussions of various issues, that it might be better not to have various issues in one treaty, and that we might have simultaneous solutions of different issues -- including some of the issues raised by Ambassador Bergström. This was an ideal opportunity of dealing with those issues concurrently and simultaneously, as suggested by the nuclear-weapon Powers, and we share the regret of the Swedish representative. We should have preferred a short recess now -- particularly as the recess is required for further allied consultations on one small, specific matter concerning the draft text of the treaty -- and perhaps a longer recess after the treaty had been presented, so that all of us could have had time to consult our Governments, and our Governments time to consult parliaments, public opinion and the Press. That would have been much more productive. At the same time this is, as I said before, a matter in which we are quite happy to be guided by the recommendation of the two co-Chairmen.

15. Mr. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA (Brazil): My delegation has some doubts about the advisability of a long recess in our work at this time. In our view a long recess might prove to be unhelpful to the continuation of a full and constructive debate in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We share the views of the representatives of Sweden and India in this connexion, and support the statements they have just made.

16. Mr. TELLO MACIAS (Mexico) (translation from Spanish): The position of the Mexican delegation with regard to our programme of work and the other procedural problems connected with it has always been to support the suggestions presented jointly by the co-Chairman of our Committee after consultation with the other delegations. We see no reason to change that position now; and we would simply express the thought that, if the progress of our work requires it, the recess that would begin now should take the place of the one that we usually have in June.

17. Mr. KHALLAF (United Arab Republic) (translation from French): My delegation would have preferred us to continue the work we began barely a month ago; but if the two co-Chairman have suggested a recess, we are quite certain they had very serious reasons for doing so. That is why we have no objection to this recess.

18. Nevertheless, in my delegation's opinion, this recess should be put to good use, not only in order to hold consultations among allies but also to examine very thoroughly the views expressed here by various delegations of the non-aligned countries concerning the non-proliferation treaty. We could hope in that way to bring our work to a fruitful stage, so that when we resume our meetings we should really have something which would take into account, not only certain regional considerations or interests, but at the same time all the anxieties of the non-aligned countries, which, I gather, represent two-thirds of the world.

19. I share also the view expressed just now by the Swedish delegation: that, although we all wish to have a "ripe" draft before us when we resume our work, that should not prevent us from simultaneously leaving the door wide open for the free and open negotiations we all desire. Indeed, as I said in my last statement, we wish our negotiations here to be truly fruitful; and, in order that they may be so, they must be open and free.

20. Mr. FOSTER (United States of America): We have listened with interest to the comments that have been made; and I intervene once more simply to refer to what our Swedish colleague said in the part of his remarks expressing his concern that the recess might interfere with progress towards the joint submission of a draft treaty to this Committee for its consideration.

21. I think my earlier statement made it clear why we feel that this recess would contribute to that objective in that it would give us a better opportunity for energetic consultations towards the end which I believe we all desire. It is our considered judgement that that is the case; and we still believe that in the end

(Mr. Foster, United States)

the recess will actually lead to better progress than would be obtained if we were perhaps to be diverted to other discussions during the few weeks while many of us were required to be elsewhere. I simply wish to reassure those who have expressed some concern about the possible interruption in this process that it is our intent to use this period actively in the interests of all of us.

22. The CHAIRMAN: Since no other representative wishes to speak on this particular subject, I shall take it that we accept the recommendation of the co-Chairmen that we recess until 9 May.

23. Does any representative wish to speak on any other issue?

24. Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translation from Russian): My delegation would like to make a few comments on the work of the Committee in general.

25. The past five weeks have been largely devoted to the problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. This is quite understandable. Exceedingly important interests of all the countries of the world, and the interests of security, are linked with the solution of this problem. Whatever the attitude of any particular State, whether a member of the Eighteen-Nation Committee or not, to individual aspects of the non-proliferation problem, there is not and there cannot be a single country or people whose interests would not be served by the solution of this problem, which is one of the most urgent problems of our time. A refusal to solve the non-proliferation problem, or inability of the representatives of States to reach agreement on its solution, would be fraught with the gravest consequences for all the countries of the world and for the whole of mankind. Such a development of events would lead to a dangerous increase in the threat of nuclear war, with very grave consequences which at present are hard to foresee.

26. At the meeting of the Committee on 21 March the representative of Burma, U Maung Maung, speaking about a non-proliferation treaty, very rightly declared that --

"...the halting and de-escalation of the armaments race would contribute substantially to the lowering and elimination of international tensions.

This would benefit all nations, and the developing nations most of all.

It would provide the necessary security and tranquillity in the international atmosphere to enable them to build healthy and beneficial societies which, after all, constitute an important factor for the continued maintenance of peace in the world." (ENDC/PV.295, para. 56)

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

27. At the twenty-first session of the General Assembly and here in the Committee stress has been laid on the urgent and inescapable need to solve the problem of non-proliferation. As was rightly pointed out here by the representative of Mexico, Mr. Garcia Robles, we must endeavour to prevent the details and particulars from blinding us to our fundamental, principal aim, the solution of the non-proliferation problem -- or, as he put it, from losing sight of the wood for the trees (ibid., para. 10) Attempts to solve many other questions within the framework of the non-proliferation problem will only protract our work, whereas we cannot defer the solution of the non-proliferation problem.

28. Nevertheless, we are obliged to note that there are influential circles in the world which are having a very negative influence on, or rather are hampering, solution of the non-proliferation problem. Those circles are acting in various ways: either they openly object to the conclusion of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, or they take roundabout ways and try to cause confusion and complications and to create all kinds of difficulties and obstacles in the way of a solution of the non-proliferation problem.

29. Of course we do not share the opinion expressed by the representative of the United Kingdom, Lord Chalfont, who at the last meeting of the Committee voiced dissatisfaction that this matter had been given due attention in the Committee and that those forces, circles and very influential persons in the Federal Republic of Germany that were manifestly obstructing and preventing the solution of the non-proliferation problem had been openly named. (ibid., paras. 27 et seq.) These questions are of too great importance to the peoples and States, and therefore they cannot be passed over in silence. It is therefore necessary to stress again and again that the difficulties in solving the problem of non-proliferation stem on the whole precisely from the Federal Republic of Germany, where influential circles have been carrying on an active campaign against the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty. In this connexion we should like to observe that the attempts of the representative of the United Kingdom, Lord Chalfont, to shield those who are preventing the achievement of an agreement on non-proliferation do not at all contribute to our progress towards the solution of this problem. The position taken by certain circles in the Federal Republic of Germany and in some countries is precisely to hamper solution of the problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

30. The situation that has come about compels us to interrupt the meetings of the Eighteen-nation Committee for a while. The Soviet delegation expresses the hope that this forced recess will be used to ensure the future completion of the work on the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty without further delay. We should like to declare here once again that the Soviet Union is in favour of the earliest conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty that would reliably close all ways of access, direct or indirect, to nuclear weapons. We stand for a treaty that would serve as a step towards the implementation of other measures in the field of disarmament, especially in regard to the limitation of the nuclear arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

31. In earlier statements we have pointed out that the arguments put forward against the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty on the ground that such a treaty would hinder the peaceful use of nuclear energy were devoid of any foundation. We stressed and continue to stress that the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty would in no way be an obstacle to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. On the contrary, the vast resources which would be saved by States as a result of refraining from the manufacture of nuclear weapons would be assigned to the peaceful utilization of scientific discoveries in the field of nuclear energy, to the expansion of peaceful branches of industry and peaceful economy, and to the development of science, culture and education.

32. We therefore share the view expressed by the representative of the United Arab Republic, Mr. Khallaf, when he said that --

"(b) A non-proliferation treaty must not, broadly speaking, constitute an obstacle to such development of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes as the non-nuclear countries would wish to carry out.

"(c) The development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes must not in any way be an excuse or a device for creating loopholes for the proliferation of nuclear weapons." (ENDC/PV.294, para. 31)

33. The Soviet Union is firmly convinced of the need to conclude a non-proliferation treaty as soon as possible. The representatives of the Soviet Union are always prepared to go on making persistent efforts, both inside and outside the Committee, to solve the problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

34. Mr. PORTER (United Kingdom): I should just like to say that I am sorry that the representative of the Soviet Union has objected to part of Lord Chalfont's speech last Tuesday, (ENDC/PV.295, paras. 27 et seq.) and I wish very briefly to expand two aspects of what Lord Chalfont said.

35. The first is that, as members of this Committee, we have a common interest in reaching agreement on a non-proliferation treaty which, to be effective, must be signed by a number of other States not represented round this table. One State whose signature is clearly important is the Federal Republic of Germany; and it does not seem to this delegation that the best way to persuade the Federal Republic of Germany -- or for that matter any other sovereign State -- to accede to this international agreement would be to heap abuse on that State.

36. The other aspect is this. There is a world of difference between a considered statement of policy by a sovereign government and any number of newspaper reports quoting individual politicians or public figures, in or out of office. One is authoritative, the other is not; and it can be misleading to confuse the two.

37. Mr. FOSTER (United States of America): I too would like to add the strong disapproval of my delegation of the comments made by the representative of the Soviet Union concerning the Federal Republic of Germany. I think indeed it may be true that the Soviet Union may have only itself to blame if repeated attacks cause the Federal Republic to have less interest in our negotiations. The Federal Republic has, after all, already renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons. I believe it is therefore greatly interested in achieving a non-proliferation treaty which will be generally acceptable, so that other governments will also renounce the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

38. I would simply repeat that, as the representative of the United Kingdom has just said, we are all aware that one does not help to achieve agreement by attacking those with whom one wishes to agree.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament held today its 296th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador V. C. Trivedi, representative of India.

"Statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Sweden, India, Brazil, Mexico, the United Arab Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 9 May 1967, at 3 p.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

